

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA

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FOLLOWING REPEAT NEHLI 10115 SENT ACTION SECSTATE IN  
USIA BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS JUL 30TH.

QUOTE:

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USIA FOR INA, IOP, IOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: OPINION POLL ON INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

BEGIN SUMMARY: A JUST-PUBLISHED PUBLIC OPINION POLL INDICATES  
THAT URBAN INDIANS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVE OF THE INDIAN NUCLEAR  
TEST CARRIED OUT IN MAY AND BELIEVE IT HAS RAISED INDIAN STATUS  
IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY. ONLY 35 PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS SURVEYED  
(910) PREFERRED TO SEE INDIA USE ITS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY ONLY  
FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. WITHOUT PUTTING TOO MUCH WEIGHT ON THE  
POLL, ABOUT WHICH EVEN THE POLLER A GALLUP AFFILIATE EXPRESSES  
SOME QUALMS, RESULTS SUGGEST THAT AT LEAST SOME SEGMENTS OF  
INDIAN PUBLIC OPINION DO NOT REFLECT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S  
DETERMINATION TO CONFINE ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM TO PEACEFUL USES.  
END SUMMARY.

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1. A LATE-JUNE PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON PUBLIC REACTION TO INDIA'S

MAY 18 NUCLEAR TEST IN THE METROPOLITAN AREAS OF NEW DELHI, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND MADRAS SHOWED THAT 91 PERCENT OF THOSE QUERIED WERE AWARE OF THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AND 90 PERCENT WERE PROUD OF THE ACHIEVEMENT. 86 PERCENT SAID THAT THE EXPLOSION HAD CHANGED THEIR OPINION OF "INDIA'S CAPACITY TO USE HIGHLY COMPLEX TECHNOLOGY." 81 PERCENT AGREED THAT THE TEST WOULD ENSURE "FASTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT"; 89 PERCENT CONCURRED THAT IT HAD "RAISED INDIA'S STATUS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

2. TWO QUESTIONS ELICITED OPINIONS ON WHETHER OR NOT INDIA SHOULD DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE FIRST FOCUSED ON 479 RESPONDENTS (OR 53 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL SAMPLE) WHO CLAIMED TO SEE A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. (THOSE WHO DID NOT, OR 47 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL SAMPLE, WERE NOT QUERIED.) 70 PERCENT OF THE RESPONSES FAVORED INDIA DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, 20 PERCENT OPPOSED, AND 5 PERCENT WERE UNDECIDED. THE SECOND QUESTION, ASKED OF 910 RESPONDENTS, DIVIDED OPINIONS ON HOW INDIA SHOULD USE ITS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY INTO THREE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES. THE RESPONSES: FOR "ONLY PEACEFUL PURPOSES--35 PERCENT"; FOR "NUCLEAR WEAPONS--11 PERCENT"; FOR "BOTH--49 PERCENT."

3. ON "THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO INDIA'S FIRST NUCLEAR BLAST," 28 PERCENT OF 910 RESPONDENTS STATED THAT THEY WERE CONCERNED, 69 PERCENT SAID THEY WERE NOT, AND 3 PERCENT HAD NO OPINION. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ON WHETHER OR NOT INDIA SHOULD PUSH AHEAD WITH ITS "PROGRAM OF NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT REGARDLESS OF INTERNATIONAL REACTION," 90 PERCENT OF 910 RESPONDENTS SAID YES, 7 PERCENT SAID, AND 3 PERCENT RENDERED NO OPINION.

4. COMMENT: THE POLL, CONDUCTED BY ERIC DACOSTA'S INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC OPINION, IS GENERALLY CONSISTENT WITH EARLIER PUBLIC AND MEDIA COMMENT ON THE INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO SUPPORT FOR THE EXPLOSION. DACOSTA HIMSELF ADDS A WORD OF CAUTION IN INTERPRETING THE RESULTS SINCE, FOR A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS, INCLUDING THE TWO IN PARAGRAPH 3 ON WHETHER INDIA SHOULD DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THERE WERE MARKED DIFFERENCES IN THE RESPONSES FROM THE FOUR CITIES WHERE THE POLLING TOOK PLACE. "THE CITYWISE CONTRASTS IN PUBLIC OPINION," HE WARNS, "ALSO INDICATE THAT THE FINDINGS OF THIS METROPOLITAN SURVEY MAY NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AREAS NOT COVERED BY THE SURVEY." PERHAPS THE MOST NOTEWORTHY CONCLUSION TO BE DRAWN FROM THE POLL, ASIDE FROM THE GENERAL ENTHUSIASM ABOUT THE TEST, IS THAT THERE IS A DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS BETWEEN SOME SECTIONS OF THE INDIAN PUBLIC AND THE GOI ON THE USES TO WHICH INDIA'S NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE PUT  
MOYNIHAN  
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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